

Press Release

From the Office of
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Mourning the Loss of J. “Putty” Putnam Henck

Pioneer left indelible mark on San Bernardino Mountains

SAN BERNARDINO, CA – Local pioneer and legend J. “Putty” Putnam Henck passed away January 15, 2010. A resident of the San Bernardino Mountain communities since 1923, Henck’s family opened the area’s fire and police departments and ran water and electricity up the mountain.

But, “Putty” was most known for opening and running the Santa’s Village Theme Park from 1955 to 1998. Many residents in the Inland Empire may not be aware of the fact that it opened six weeks before Disneyland, but many remember the commercials from their youth and grew up to associate the San Bernardino Mountains with Santa’s Village.

“The history of our mountains cannot be written without mentioning the contributions of Putty and his family,” said Supervisor Neil Derry. **“He lived his life well and leaves an enduring legacy.”**

His love and commitment to the community was deep and reflected by his numerous attachments to various nonprofit groups and boosters. The Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce recognized him as a Citizen of the Year and the Visitor Center in Lake Arrowhead Village is named in his honor.

A graduate of the University of California Berkeley engineering program, he designed many airbases in Central and South America and was renowned for his work with concrete.

A memorial service will be held on January 23rd at the Lake Arrowhead Resort and Spa. Putty was 91-years old.